

# The Biblical Pretribulation Rapture

By David J. Stewart | December 2013 | Updated January 2016



**1st Thessalonians 4:17, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."**

## Were Billy Sunday, Moody, Jones, Hutson, Rice and Ironside All Wrong?

May I humbly make the important observation that the greatest men of God of the past 150 years all believed in a PRETRIBULATION RAPTURE! Harry A. Ironside, John R. Rice, Jack Hyles, Bob Jones Sr., Lee Roberson, Oliver B. Greene, R.A. Torrey, Dwight Moody, Lester Roloff, Curtis Hutson, Billy Sunday, W.A. Criswell, Charles C. Ryrie, Mark G. Cambron, Raymond Barber and others all concluded and taught a Pretribulation Rapture of the saints!!! Amen! Were they all wrong on the Bible? I think not!

## Evangelist Billy Sunday Taught a Pretribulation Rapture!

Read what Evangelist Billy Sunday said in his classic sermon, "*The Second Coming Of Christ*" ...

**The Lord does not come to the world at the time of the Rapture, but only reveals himself to the members of His Body. At the time of his resurrection He was only seen by those who believed on Him. Pilate and the High Priest, and those who crucified Him, did not know that He was risen. So it will be at the time of the Rapture. The world will not**

know that He has been here, and will have no knowledge of Him until He comes with the members of His Body, at the close of the Tribulation.

**SOURCE:** [The Second Coming of Christ — by Evangelist Billy Sunday](#)

Clearly, Billy Sunday concluded and taught a Pretribulation Rapture. The Bible very plainly teaches that the TIME of the Rapture is a carefully guarded secret. Those critics who decry a “secret Rapture” are criticizing the Lord’s very Words, for Jesus clearly stated in *Mark 13:32-33*, “*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.*” The timing of the Rapture my friend is indeed A BIG SECRET!!! And again we read in *Matthew 24:36*, “*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*”

## Evangelist John R. Rice Taught a Pretribulation Rapture!

Dr. John R. Rice (1895-1980) wrote over 200 books, founded over a dozen churches and led numerous city-wide campaigns to bring America to Jesus Christ. [Brother Rice taught a Pre-Tribulation Rapture!](#) Was this mighty scholar and great man of God wrong? I'm not trying to be unkind, but today's doctrinally messed-up Bible teachers and wayward preachers DON'T STUDY!!!

The following is Dr. John R. Rice's doctrinally sound, Biblical, explanation of the Pre-Tribulation Rapture...

“The rapture will come, as most reputable premillennial Bible teachers agree, before the Great Tribulation time. Then after the Great Tribulation (which will occur in Daniel's seventieth week, as I believe), Christ will return with these saints and with angels to fight the battle of Armageddon, to destroy the kingdom of the Antichrist, and to set up His throne at Jerusalem and reign on the earth for a thousand years of joy and peace. There are two separate phases of Christ's coming. That for which we wait is His coming into the air to receive His saints. Then after the tribulation time, those who will have been converted on the earth will long for Christ's return, with us, to set up His kingdom. It is this second phase of Christ's coming, when He shall come literally to the earth to take charge and to reign, that is discussed in this passage.”

**SOURCE:** [Evangelist John R. Rice](#) (1895-1980), chapter 3 from the excellent book, [We Can Have Revival Now](#).

Amen! How about the legendary pastor, author and man of God, Pastor Lee Roberson! Was Dr. Lee Roberson (1909-2007) wrong to teach that [the Church WON'T go through the Tribulation period](#)? Read Dr. Roberson's inspiring book, [Some Golden Daybreak!](#) Clearly, Pastor Lee Roberson believed and taught a Pretribulation RAPTURE (that is, the Lord is coming to remove His saints from the world BEFORE the 7-year Tribulation period). For an

excellent, doctrinally sound, exegesis of Biblical prophecy, please read the free online .pdf book, "[I KNOW WHO HOLDS TOMORROW](#)" by Pastor Max D. Younce, Th.D.

Alex Jones' claims that he doesn't believe in evolution, but [he continually teaches it](#), referring to man's caveman-like instincts, plainly denying the Genesis account of creation. Mike Adams has been plugging Conscious Cosmology on Infowars, which is total New Age heresy! Alex Jones increasingly has been treading on holy ground by trampling down the truth of God's Word with his various heathen ideologies, false doctrines and heretical philosophies on life. Alex knows his stuff when it comes to the New World Order; but he is a lost sheep when it comes to the truth of God's Word in the Bible. Alex claims to believe that the Bible is inspired, which is awesome, but he needs to stop making BOLD spiritual statements unless he knows they are true! Alex dogmatically makes a lot of bold statements that are total heresy; such as, his claim that the Pre-Tribulation Rapture doctrine is of the Devil. END

**Mark 13:32, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."**

***"As a blind man has no idea of colors, so we have no idea of the manner by which the all-wise God perceives and understands all things."* —Isaac Newton (1642-1727)**

## **32 Differences Between the Rapture & Second Coming**

The following 32 distinctions help to grasp the differences between these two great future events. Keep in mind that the RAPTURE happens BEFORE the 7-year Tribulation period; and then after the 7-years the glorious SECOND COMING (glorious appearing) of our great Lord, King and Savior will happen, when the entire world beholds Him...

<b><u><i>The Rapture</i></u></b>	<b><u><i>The Second Coming</i></u></b>
At the Rapture, Jesus comes FOR His Church. (John 14:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17)	At the Glorious Appearing (Second Coming), Jesus comes WITH His Church. (Zechariah 14:5, Colossians 3:4, Jude 14, Revelation 19:14)

At the Rapture, Christians are caught up to meet Jesus in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)	At the Glorious Appearing, Jesus' feet touch the earth (Zechariah 14:4, Revelation 19:11-21)
At the Rapture, Christians are taken up but unbelievers are left behind. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)	At the Glorious Appearing, the unsaved wicked (tares) are taken up, but the righteous (wheat, i.e., the tribulation saints) are left behind. (Matthew 13:28-30)
At the Rapture, Jesus will gather His Bride, the Church, unto Himself in preparation of the Marriage of the Lamb. (Revelation 19:6-9)	At the Glorious Appearing, Jesus will execute judgment on the earth and establish His Kingdom. (Zechariah 14:3-4, Jude 14-15, Revelation 19:11-21)
The Marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven AFTER the Rapture of the Church. (Revelation 19:6-9)	War on earth comes AFTER the Marriage of the Lamb at the Glorious Appearing when the King of Kings and Lord of Lords lays the smackdown on evil! (Revelation 19:11-21)
The Rapture will happen in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye (Blink. It's over!). (1 Corinthians 15:52)	The Glorious Appearing will be a slow coming. Everyone will see Jesus coming with great power and great glory! (Zechariah 12:10, Matthew 24:30, Revelation 1:7)
At the Rapture, only those who are looking for Him (Christians) will see Him. (1 John 3:2, 1 Corinthians 15:52)	At the Glorious Appearing, every eye will see Him and those who have rejected Him will wail. (Revelation 1:7)
At the Rapture, Jesus will descend from Heaven with a shout (calling for the saints at the resurrection). (1 Thessalonians 4:16)	At the Glorious Appearing, no shout is mentioned, although the Lord does slay the wicked with the sword of His mouth. (Revelation 19:11-21)
The <u>"First Resurrection" of Revelation 20:6 includes 5 separate resurrections</u> . At the Rapture, the third of these	At the Glorious Appearing of Jesus Christ, the final of these 5 (of the First Resurrection) will happen. (Daniel 12:2 contrasts

resurrections occurs. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. The First Resurrection is only for born-again believers, that is, Christians.)	the saved with the unsaved, speaking of both the First and the Second Resurrection. The Second Resurrection is only for the unsaved damned.)
The Rapture can happen at any time...maybe even now which is why we are to be WATCHING for the return of Jesus Christ! (Revelation 3:3, 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6)	The Glorious Appearing will occur at the end of the seven-year tribulation period. (Daniel 9:24-27, Matthew 24:29-30, 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8)
At the Rapture, no angels are sent to gather the Church.	At the Glorious Appearing, angels will be sent to gather people together for judgment. (Matthew 13:39, 41 & 49, Matthew 24:31, Matthew 25:31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10)
At the Rapture, those who died in Christ will return with Jesus to recover their resurrected bodies. (1 Thessalonians 4:14-16)	At the Glorious Appearing, Christians will return with Jesus already in their resurrected bodies, riding on white horses wearing white linen. (Revelation 19:11-21)
At the Rapture, Jesus doesn't return riding a white horse.	At the Glorious Appearing, Jesus will return riding a white horse. (Revelation 19:11)
The Rapture will bring with it a message of hope and comfort. (1 Thessalonians 4:18, Titus 2:13, 1 John 3:3)	The Glorious Appearing will bring with it a message of judgment. (Joel 3:12-16, Malachi 4:5, Revelation 19:11-21)
World is deceived. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12)	Satan is bound. (Revelation 20:1-2)
Focus: Lord and Church. (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)	Focus: Israel and Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14)
No signs precede Rapture. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)	Signs precede Second Coming. (Luke 21:11,15)

Tribulation begins.	Millennial kingdom begins.
Manifestation of Antichrist. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)	Manifestation of Jesus Christ. (Malachi 4:2)
Jesus claims His bride.	Jesus comes with His bride. (Revelation 19:6-14)
Marriage Supper Of The Lamb follows the Rapture. (Revelation 19:9)	The Great Supper of the wicked follows the Tribulation. (Revelation 19:17)
The world will not see Jesus at the Rapture; but rather, believers ascend go to meet Him in the air. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)	Jesus will descend bodily and visibly for all to see, just as He ascended bodily and visibly. (Acts 1:9-11)
The Judgment Seat Of Christ follows the Rapture. (2nd Corinthians 5:9-11)	The Judgment of the Nations follows the Tribulation (Matthew 24:32-46)
Believers receive a new, immortal, glorified body fashioned like unto the Lord's. (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54)	Saints saved during the Tribulation enter into the Millennial kingdom with their earthly bodies. (Isaiah 65:20)
The Antichrist is revealed after the Rapture. (2 Thessalonians 2:8)	The Antichrist is defeated and cast into the Lake of Fire at the Second Coming. (Revelation 19:20)
Israel is persecuted during the Tribulation. Two-in-three Jews in Israel are killed. (Zechariah 13:8-9)	Israel is regathered. (Jeremiah 23:5-8)
The timing of the Rapture is unknown. It is a secret. No man, nor the angels, not even the Son, know when this time shall be (Mark 13:32). Only a	The timing of Christ's Second Coming is known, which is at the culmination of the 7-year Tribulation (or, Daniel's 70th week). The Rapture starts the

pretribulation Rapture position supports this vital Biblical truth.	calendar clock for Daniel's 70th week.
World government (New World Order) follows the Rapture. (Revelation 13:15)	Christ's reign and government follows the Second Coming. (Daniel 2:34-35)
The <u>Lord</u> gathers the saints (2nd Thessalonians 2:1)	The <u>angels</u> gather the saints (the elect, Matthew 24:31)
Both the <u>living and the dead</u> saints are gathered (1st Thessalonians 4:16-17)	<u>Only the living</u> saints are gathered (Matthew 24:31)
The <u>trumpet shall sound</u> multiple times, and at THE LAST TRUMP (trumpet blow), we (believers) shall all be changed, glorious resurrected with an incorruptible body (1st Corinthians 15:52; 1st Thessalonians 4:16)	The Lord's voice is <u>as a trumpet</u> (Revelation 1:10-11). There is no trumpet mentioned at Christ's Second Coming.
World famine, pestilence, war and sorrow follow the Rapture. (Matthew 24:6-10; Luke 17:31)	World peace follows Christ's Second Coming when He reigns from Jerusalem (Isaiah 11:6)

CLEARLY, although some of the previous contrasts are debatable, most of them plainly evidence that there is absolutely NO WAY that the Rapture can happen AFTER the Tribulation! The serious and diligent Bible student who considers all of the preceding 32 distinct differences between the Rapture and the Second Coming of Christ can only conclude a Pre-Tribulation Rapture!!! [Here is a helpful prophecy chart by Pastor Harry A. Ironside \(1876-1951\) showing the timing of Biblical events.](#)



*The Pre-Tribulation Rapture Plain And Simple*  
(an excerpt from the 338-page book, *I Know Who Holds Tomorrow*)

## Pastor Oliver B. Greene Taught a Pretribulation Rapture!

Evangelist Oliver B. Greene (1915-1976) states in support of the Pretribulation Rapture...

God did not judge Sodom until Lot was safe outside the city walls (Genesis 19). Nor did God utterly destroy Jericho until Rahab was saved (Joshua 6). This will be just as true in the future; God will not judge this earth, nor the wicked in the final judgment, until the Church is taken out of the earth. That promise is clear: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Revelation 3:10). This verse definitely refers to the great Tribulation period. The Rapture takes place at the beginning of chapter four. A door is opened in Heaven and a Voice cries out, "Come up hither!" And the Church is raptured out of the earth to meet the Lord in the air. Read I Thessalonians 4:13-18. ...

## A PROPHETIC DECLARATION

Revelation 1:7: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

The second coming of our Lord is a vital part of Christian doctrine, and there has never been a time of greater need for the preaching of this truth than today.

It is essential to distinguish the two parts of His second coming. There is definitely a period of time between the Rapture (the time when Jesus comes FOR His saints) and the Revelation (when He comes WITH His saints). The Rapture is mentioned in John 14:3; Philippians 3:20; I Thessalonians 4:15-18; and I Corinthians 15:23.

All these Scriptures refer to the next great event for Christians - the Rapture of the Church - the time when Jesus comes for His saints, and every living, born again, blood-washed child of God will be caught up to meet Him; the bodies of all the saints who have died will be raised incorruptible, and we will all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the clouds in the air.

But there is another group of Scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments which distinctly teach another coming, and verse 7 in our present chapter refers to this time when Jesus will come WITH His saints. (In connection with this read Jude 14; Zechariah 14:5; Colossians 3:4 and Revelation 19:11-14).

The statement, "Behold, He cometh with clouds" agrees with Daniel's statement "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of Heaven" (Daniel 7:13). This also corresponds with the prophetic utterance of the Lord on the Mount of Olives: "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30b).

All these Scriptures refer to the Revelation - the time when Jesus will come in the air and EVERY EYE shall see Him. When the Rapture takes place, no person will see the Lord Jesus. He will not come to the earth; He will descend in the air, the trumpet will sound, the voice of the archangel will call the saints up to meet Jesus in the air. He will not stand on the earth when He comes in the Rapture, but He WILL stand on the earth when He comes in the second phase of His return. Zechariah 14:4 definitely describes the Lord Jesus standing on the Mount of Olives.

The prophets throughout the era of the Old Testament had two great prophetic themes: Judgment - and Glory. The Old Testament prophet did not see the church age it was a mystery until it was revealed to the Apostle Paul, who makes known that revelation in the book of Ephesians. As the end of the church age draws near, Jews and Gentiles will become wicked as never before on the face of the earth (Isaiah 60:2).

The nations will be gathered in open rebellion against the Lamb of God (Revelation 19:19) and they will fight against Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:2).

Therefore, the earth must be cleared of evil and ungodly men before the Lord Jesus comes back to reign in glory, with His Church. Before leaving this section, let me point out that Christ is nowhere said to come with the clouds to gather the Church out of the earth. On the contrary, the saints go up in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17). God provides a royal carriage to convey the saints from the earth to meet the Lord in the air. Clouds in the Old Testament were the well-known symbol of the presence of the Lord with His people (Exodus 13:21-40; Exodus 40:34-38; Luke 9:35).

Christ is not only said to come "in the clouds" (Mark 13:26) but He will come with the clouds (Revelation 1:7) and in the clouds (Matthew 24:30). The clouds which attend His coming are symbols of His majesty and glory. Read Psalm 18:9-12. The Lord sits on the clouds, as on His throne. We believers will be caught up in the clouds (I Thessalonians 4:17).

The Lord Jesus ascended in the clouds (Acts 1:9) and He will come in a cloud (Luke 21:27). These facts are very interesting to spiritually minded believers. The statement "every eye shall see Him" is to be taken literally. Every eye will not see Him at the same identical split second - but every eye will see Jesus. One class is singled out from the mass of mankind and mentioned as "they which pierced Him."

The entire earth will be in open conflict against the Lord God and His Anointed (read Psalm 2), but this one group is pointed out specifically. John is the only one who records the incident of the Gentile spear which pierced the Saviour's side (John 19:33-37). Pilate admitted three times that there was no fault in Jesus (John 18:38-19:6); but in spite of the fact that Rome knew Jesus to be innocent, they allowed Him to be scourged and crucified. The Jews screamed aloud for His death. They invited His blood to be not only upon them, but upon their children; and their children have inherited that guilt for generations. They will see Him "whom they pierced" (read Zechariah 12:10).

The peoples referred to as "those who pierced Him" are the people whom we know today as Jews.

"All the tribes of the earth shall wail because of Him." This coming in the clouds in great glory and power will take place over the entire universe at the same identical time. All the peoples of all the earth will see the Son of God coming in the clouds of Glory. In chapter six we will learn that a world-wide prayer meeting will immediately be in progress . . . but the prayers will be unanswered.

Verse 7 closes with the words ". . . Even so, Amen." That is a double "amen," and certainly carries much weight spiritually. Amen means "so

be it." The Spirit is saying here, "This is true. It will happen exactly as stated."

SOURCE: Dr. Oliver B. Greene, a quote from chapter 1 of the excellent book, "*THE REVELATION*," ©1963, *The Gospel Hour*

Jeremiah 6:16, "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and **ask for the old paths**, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."

**A Defense Of The Pretribulation Rapture In Matthew 24:36-44** (The Olivet Discourse)

**"Ye that love the LORD, hate evil..." —Psalm 97:10**

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